

AF (IFU)

Approved for use through 07/31/2006. OMB 0651-0031  
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

# TRANSMITTAL FORM

(to be used for all correspondence after initial filing)

Total Number of Pages in This Submission

22

Application Number

10/776,112

Filing Date

2/11/2004

First Named Inventor

Conzola

Art Unit

2876

Examiner Name

Daniel A. Hess

Attorney Docket Number

RPS920030163US1 (7036-P255US)

## ENCLOSURES (Check all that apply)



Fee Transmittal Form



Fee Attached



Amendment/Reply



After Final



Affidavits/declaration(s)



Extension of Time Request



Express Abandonment Request



Information Disclosure Statement



Certified Copy of Priority Document(s)



Reply to Missing Parts/ Incomplete Application



Reply to Missing Parts under 37 CFR 1.52 or 1.53



Drawing(s)



Licensing-related Papers



Petition



Petition to Convert to a Provisional Application



Power of Attorney, Revocation



Change of Correspondence Address



Terminal Disclaimer



Request for Refund



CD, Number of CD(s)

Landscape Table on CD



After Allowance Communication to TC



Appeal Communication to Board of Appeals and Interferences



Appeal Communication to TC (Appeal Notice, Brief, Reply Brief)



Proprietary Information



Status Letter



Other Enclosure(s) (please identify below):

1) Postcard

Remarks

## SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT, ATTORNEY, OR AGENT

Firm Name

Winstead Sechrest & Minick P.C.

Signature

Printed name

Kelly K. Kordzik

Date

July 29, 2005

Reg. No.

36,571

## CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION/MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the USPTO or deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on the date shown below:

Signature

Wanda Kellar

Typed or printed name

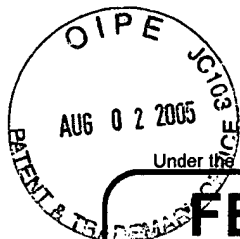
Wanda Kellar

Date

July 29, 2005

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.5. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.11 and 1.14. This collection is estimated to 2 hours to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. **SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.**

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 and select option 2.



PTO/SB/17 (10-03)

Approved for use through 07/31/2006. OMB 0651-0032  
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Under the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number.

# FEE TRANSMITTAL for FY 2004

Effective 10/01/2003. Patent fees are subject to annual revision.

☐ Applicant claims small entity status. See 37 CFR 1.27

TOTAL AMOUNT OF PAYMENT (\$ 500.00)

**Complete if Known**

Application Number	10/776,112
Filing Date	2/11/2004
First Named Inventor	Conzola
Examiner Name	Daniel A. Hess
Art Unit	2876
Attorney Docket No.	RPS920030163US1 (7036-P255US)

**METHOD OF PAYMENT (check all that apply)**☐ Check ☐ Credit card ☐ Money Order ☒ Other ☐ None☒ Deposit Account:Deposit  
Account  
Number  
Deposit  
Account  
Name

50-0563

IBM Corporation

The Director is authorized to: (check all that apply)

☐ Charge fee(s) indicated below ☒ Credit any overpayments☒ Charge any additional fee(s) or any underpayment of fee(s)☐ Charge fee(s) indicated below, except for the filing fee  
to the above-identified deposit account.**FEE CALCULATION****1. BASIC FILING FEE**

Large Entity		Small Entity		Fee Description	Fee Paid
Fee Code	Fee (\$)	Fee Code	Fee (\$)		
1001	770	2001	385	Utility filing fee	
1002	340	2002	170	Design filing fee	
1003	530	2003	265	Plant filing fee	
1004	770	2004	385	Reissue filing fee	
1005	160	2005	80	Provisional filing fee	
SUBTOTAL (1)					(\$ 0.00)

**2. EXTRA CLAIM FEES FOR UTILITY AND REISSUE**

		Extra Claims		Fee from below	Fee Paid
Total Claims	<input type="text"/>	-20** =	<input type="text"/>		
Independent Claims	<input type="text"/>	- 8** =	<input type="text"/>	X	<input type="text"/>
Multiple Dependent	<input type="text"/>				<input type="text"/>

Large Entity		Small Entity		Fee Description
Fee Code	Fee (\$)	Fee Code	Fee (\$)	
1202	18	2202	9	Claims in excess of 20
1201	86	2201	43	Independent claims in excess of 3
1203	290	2203	145	Multiple dependent claim, if not paid
1204	86	2204	43	** Reissue independent claims over original patent
1205	18	2205	9	** Reissue claims in excess of 20 and over original patent

SUBTOTAL (2) (\$ 0.00)

\*\*or number previously paid, if greater; For Reissues, see above

**FEE CALCULATION (continued)****3. ADDITIONAL FEES**

Large Entity Small Entity

Fee Code	Fee (\$)	Fee Code	Fee (\$)	Fee Description	Fee Paid
1051	130	2051	65	Surcharge - late filing fee or oath	
1052	50	2052	25	Surcharge - late provisional filing fee or cover sheet	
1053	130	1053	130	Non-English specification	
1812	2,520	1812	2,520	For filing a request for ex parte reexamination	
1804	920*	1804	920*	Requesting publication of SIR prior to Examiner action	
1805	1,840*	1805	1,840*	Requesting publication of SIR after Examiner action	
1251	110	2251	55	Extension for reply within first month	
1252	420	2252	210	Extension for reply within second month	
1253	950	2253	475	Extension for reply within third month	
1254	1,480	2254	740	Extension for reply within fourth month	
1255	2,010	2255	1,005	Extension for reply within fifth month	
1401	330	2401	165	Notice of Appeal	
1402	330	2402	165	Filing a brief in support of an appeal	500.00
1403	290	2403	145	Request for oral hearing	
1451	1,510	1451	1,510	Petition to institute a public use proceeding	
1452	110	2452	55	Petition to revive - unavoidable	
1453	1,330	2453	665	Petition to revive - unintentional	
1501	1,330	2501	665	Utility issue fee (or reissue)	
1502	480	2502	240	Design issue fee	
1503	640	2503	320	Plant issue fee	
1460	130	1460	130	Petitions to the Commissioner	
1807	50	1807	50	Processing fee under 37 CFR 1.17(q)	
1806	180	1806	180	Submission of Information Disclosure Stmt	
8021	40	8021	40	Recording each patent assignment per property (times number of properties)	
1809	770	2809	385	Filing a submission after final rejection (37 CFR 1.129(a))	
1810	770	2810	385	For each additional invention to be examined (37 CFR 1.129(b))	
1801	770	2801	385	Request for Continued Examination (RCE)	
1802	900	1802	900	Request for expedited examination of a design application	

Other fee (specify)

\*Reduced by Basic Filing Fee Paid

SUBTOTAL (3) (\$ 500.00)

**SUBMITTED BY**

Name (Print/Type)

Kelly K. Kordzik

Registration No.  
(Attorney/Agent)

36,571

(Complete (if applicable))

Telephone 512.370.2832

Signature

Date

July 29, 2005

**WARNING: Information on this form may become public. Credit card information should not be included on this form. Provide credit card information and authorization on PTO-2038.**

This collection of information is required by 37 CFR 1.17 and 1.27. The information is required to obtain or retain a benefit by the public which is to file (and by the USPTO to process) an application. Confidentiality is governed by 35 U.S.C. 122 and 37 CFR 1.14. This collection is estimated to take 12 minutes to complete, including gathering, preparing, and submitting the completed application form to the USPTO. Time will vary depending upon the individual case. Any comments on the amount of time you require to complete this form and/or suggestions for reducing this burden, should be sent to the Chief Information Officer, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Department of Commerce, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450. DO NOT SEND FEES OR COMPLETED FORMS TO THIS ADDRESS. SEND TO: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

If you need assistance in completing the form, call 1-800-PTO-9199 and select option 2.



- 1 -

## BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

In re Application of:	:	Before the Examiner:
Vincent C. Conzola	:	Daniel A. Hess
	:	
Serial No.: 10/776,112	:	Group Art Unit: 2876
	:	
Filing Date: February 11, 2004	:	
	:	IBM Corporation
Title: PRODUCT CHECKOUT	:	P.O. Box 12195
SYSTEM WITH ANTI-THEFT	:	Dept. 9CCA, Bldg. 002-2
DEVICE	:	Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

**APPEAL BRIEF**

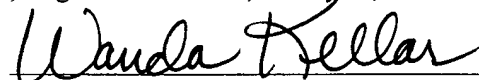
Mail Stop Appeal Brief-Patents  
Commissioner for Patents  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**I. REAL PARTY IN INTEREST**

The real party in interest is International Business Machines, Inc., which is the assignee of the entire right, title and interest in the above-identified patent application.

**CERTIFICATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. §1.8**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Mail Stop Appeal Brief-Patents, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450, on July 29, 2005.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

08/03/2005 MWOLDGE1 00000013 500563 10776112

01 FC:1402 500.00 DA

Wanda Kellar  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name of person certifying)

## II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no other appeals or interferences known to Appellants, Appellants' legal representative or assignee which will directly affect or be directly affected by or have a bearing on the Board's decision in the pending appeal.

## III. STATUS OF CLAIMS

In a Reply under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111 filed on February 2, 2005, the Applicant cancelled claims 1-8 and 18-23. In the Final Office Action mailed on April 5, 2005, the Examiner acknowledges Applicant's February 2005 filing. (Final Office Action, Pg. 2). However, on pages 1 and 4-6 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner addresses the patentability of the cancelled claims despite those claims having already been cancelled. Assuming claims 1-8 and 18-23 were indeed cancelled, and further assuming that the Examiner's review of those claims in the Final Office Action was an oversight, the status of the claims is as follows:

Claims 9-17 and 24-32 are pending in the application.

Claims 9-17 and 24-32 are rejected.

The rejections for claims 9-17 and 24-32 are being appealed.

## IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

No amendments were filed subsequent to the final rejection.

## V. SUMMARY OF CLAIMED SUBJECT MATTER

### *Independent Claim 9*

Independent claim 9 concerns a check-out system with an anti-theft device. Such systems may be found in grocery or hardware stores whereby a store clerk scans

the bar code on a product and then deactivates a security tag on the product so the customer can leave the store without setting off any security alarms. The system of claim 9 improves check-out systems because it includes several steps such as (i) examining a product while the product is in a substantially enclosed area; (ii) establishing physical features for the product while it is in the substantially enclosed area (Fig. 6, References 620, 625); and (iii) deactivating the product's security tag while the product is in the substantially enclosed area (Fig. 6, References 620, 645). (Specification, Pg. 9, Lines 1-23; Fig. 7, Reference 710). Thus, the system of claim 9 (i) examines a product; (ii) establishes physical features for the product; and (iii) and deactivates the product tag all while the product is in the substantially enclosed area. Therefore, because a product is examined, evaluated and deactivated in a substantially enclosed area, theft (*e.g.*, "sweet-hearting") is prevented because a thief is deterred from placing a second product (and likely more expensive product) in the deactivation field along with the product that was properly examined and evaluated.

*Independent Claim 24*

Independent claim 24 provides a check-out system comprising (i) an evaluator for establishing physical features for a product while the product is in a substantially enclosed area (Fig. 6, References 620, 625); and (ii) a deactivation device for deactivating the product security tag while the product is in the substantially enclosed area (Fig. 6, References 620, 645). (Specification, Pg. 9, Lines 1-23; Fig. 7, Reference 710). Thus, the system of claim 24 (i) establishes physical features and (ii) deactivates the product's tag all while the product is in the substantially enclosed area. Therefore, as indicated above when discussing claim 9, theft is deterred.

VI. GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

Claims 9-17 and 24-32 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Bellis et al.* (U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0024982) (hereafter "*Bellis*") in view of *Novak* (U.S. Patent No. 5,497,314) (hereafter "*Novak*").

VII. ARGUMENT

Claims 9-17 and 24-32 are rejected as being obvious in light of *Bellis* and *Novak*. To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Third, the asserted reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claimed limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claimed combinations and their reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the asserted reference(s) and not based on applicant's disclosure. M.P.E.P. § 2142. The April 5, 2005 Final Office Action ("Office Action") does not meet this three-part burden and consequently, Applicant respectfully traverses the obviousness rejections.

Claims 9 - 17

Independent claim 9, and its dependent claims 10 - 17, are not obvious in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or *Bellis* in view of *Novak* for any of the following reasons.

A. Cited References Fail to Teach Every Element of Claim

Rejections under §103 require that the cited references teach *every* element of the claim. M.P.E.P. §2143.03. *Bellis*, *Novak*, or *Bellis* in light of *Novak* fail to teach *every* element of claim 9. Therefore, because the Office Action fails to satisfy one of

the three factors required to prove a *prima facie* case of obviousness, claim 9 is not obvious in light of the cited references.

Claim 9 provides:

A check-out method ... comprising the steps of:

...

examining said product while said product is in said substantially enclosed area;

establishing ... physical features for said product while said product is in said substantially enclosed area;

...

deactivating said tag ... while said product is in said substantially enclosed area.

Thus, claim 9 recites a method that "examine[s] said product", "establish[es] one or more physical features for said product", and "deactivat[es] said tag ... while said product is in said substantially enclosed area."

In contrast, the Office Action provides that (i) *Bellis* deactivates a product's security tag while the product is in the detection area and that (ii) *Novak* teaches "an enclosure cover[s] the detection area." Therefore, "using *Novak's* teaching, an enclosure covered the detection area, and automatically this enclosure would also encompass the deactivation system, since *Bellis'* deactivation system occurs with products that are in the sensing area." (Office Action, pp. 3-4). However, further analysis of *Bellis* illustrates the shortcomings in this proposition.

*Bellis* provides:

The bagging station 270 may further include one or more electronic article – surveillance monitors 300 . . . for verifying that all the items have been scanned into the self-check out system 100 and deactivating

the magnetic security tag on the item. Alternatively, the electronic surveillance deactivator may also be incorporated within the identification-code leader 120.

(*Bellis*, p. 2, ¶ 19; Fig. 1). *Bellis* further provides:

The system 100 may also include an item-shape sensor 600 as shown in Figure 2. The item-shape sensor 600 may be positioned between the scanning/payment station 110 and the bagging station 270. The item-shape sensor 600 generally comprises a tunnel 602 with a conveyor belt 603 moving at the base of the tunnel 602.

(*Bellis*, p. 2, ¶ 20; Figs. 1-2). Thus, *Bellis* places an item-shape sensor 600 between the scanning station 110 and the bagging station 270. *Bellis* had earlier provided that any electronic article surveillance deactivator 120, 300 would be located in the scanning station 110 or bagging station 270. In short, *Bellis* provides an item-shape sensor 600, comprising a tunnel, that is located in between the disclosed locations for article surveillance deactivators 120, 300. Thus, *Bellis* does not teach or suggest the element in claim 9 concerning "deactivating said tag . . . while said product is in said substantially enclosed area."

*Novak* fails to remedy *Bellis*' shortcomings. *Novak* provides:

The items are placed on the conveyor by the customer, and are automatically conveyed into an enclosed housing containing an illumination source . . . and video imaging equipment . . . . Digital image processing techniques and technology are used to identify the items by taking a digitized image of the object . . . . By correlating the digital image of each object to additional identification characteristic of the item, a precise determination of proper identity is accomplished . . . .

(*Novak*, Col. 2, lines 12-31). Thus, *Novak* discloses an "enclosed housing" 4 (Fig. 1) wherein a product is analyzed. This housing is analogous to the tunnel 602 associated with the item-shape sensor 600 in *Bellis* (Fig. 2). Consequently, as far as use of a tunnel or house is concerned, *Novak* adds little to *Bellis*.



Put another way, when *Bellis* contemplated use of a tunnel to analyze a product, any deactivation of security tags took place outside of that tunnel at the scanning station 110 or the bagging station 270. (*Bellis*, p. 2, ¶ 19-20). *Novak* is just another example of a housing area used for analysis of a product. In short, neither *Bellis* nor *Novak*, or their combination, consider the deactivation of tags in a substantially enclosed area. In other words, a person of ordinary skill in the art looking at *Bellis* and/or *Novak* would appreciate no teaching or suggestion for the element in claim 9 concerning "deactivating said tag . . . while said product is in said substantial enclosed area." The only such teaching or suggestion is found in the applicant's disclosure. To avoid impermissible hindsight, judgments on obviousness may take into account only knowledge that was in the level of ordinary skill in the art and may not include knowledge gleaned only from the applicant's disclosure. M.P.E.P. § 2145; *In Re McLaughlin*, 443 F.2d 1392, 1395 (CCPA 1971).

Consequently, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has failed to prove a *prima facie* case of obviousness in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak* because the references do not teach or suggest all of the elements of the claim (i.e., deactivating said tag . . . while said product is in said substantially enclosed area.) M.P.E.P. §2143.03; *In re Rouffet*, 47 U.S.P.Q.2d. 1453, 1455 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (§103 rejections must not rely on incorrect factual predicates such as failing to appreciate differences between a claim and prior art.) As a result, claim 9 (and dependent claims 10 - 17) are not obvious in light of the cited references.

#### B. No Motivation to Combine the Cited References

Rejections under § 103 require evidence of some motivation or suggestion to modify the reference or to combine reference teachings. The cited references cannot be modified or combined as proposed by the Examiner due to the Examiner's failure

to provide a motivation to combine the cited references. M.P.E.P. § 2143.01. Therefore, because the Office Action fails to satisfy one of the three factors required to prove a *prima facie* case of obviousness, claim 9 is not obvious in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak*.

There are three possible sources for a motivation to combine references: the nature of the problem to be solved, the teachings of the asserted reference(s), and the knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art. M.P.E.P. § 2143.01; *In Re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350, 1357 (Fed. Cir. 1998). These three sources are addressed below.

*Nature of the Problem to be Solved*

Claim 9 is not obvious in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak* considering the cited references cannot be modified or combined as proposed by the Examiner because the references address different problems (one of the three possible sources of motivation to combine references). M.P.E.P. § 2143.01.

A motivation to combine references may be based on the nature of the problem to be solved when each reference is directed to "precisely the same problem." *Ruiz v. A.B. Chance Co.*, 357 F.3d 1270 (Fed. Cir. 2004).

*Bellis* addresses the following problem:

[T]he current self check out system may still require a high degree of store employee or operator intervention. Because a machine lacks the judgment of a human being, these systems tend to be very rigid and inflexible. Hence a need exists for a system that provides more efficient throughout and retains adequate security.

(*Bellis*, p. 1, ¶ 6). Thus, *Bellis* addresses security concerns and speed.

In contrast, *Novak* is directed towards the following problem:

Methods [that] provide a relatively simple system for the automated check-out of retail items as not dependent upon the involvement of customer or store personnel.

(*Novak*, Col. 1, line 66 – Col. 2, line 2). *Novak* addresses systems that are automated and, unlike *Bellis*, do not require human intervention. Thus, *Bellis* and *Novak* are not addressed towards "precisely the same problem." Therefore, the "nature of the problem" factor illustrates there is no suggestion or motivation to modify the references.

Thus, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has failed to prove a *prima facie* case of obviousness for claim 9 (as well as dependent claims 10 – 17) in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak*, considering the cited references cannot be modified or combined as proposed by the Examiner because the cited references address different problems (i.e., security vs. automated check-out). M.P.E.P. § 2143.01.

#### *Teachings of the Asserted References*

Claim 9 is not obvious in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak* because the teachings of the asserted references do not provide or suggest a motivation to modify or combine the references. M.P.E.P. § 2143.01.

The Office Action states that:

[T]he concept of 'teaching away' is based on the idea that a first invention would not function properly or would not fulfill its intended purpose if modified based on the teachings of the second invention . . . there is no reason to believe that surrounding the detecting area of *Bellis*' enclosure would somehow stop it from working properly.

(Office Action, p. 3). The Office Action fails to supply any legal precedent for this assertion. In fact, the concept of 'teaching away' is not so limited. For example, a prior art reference must be considered in its entirety, i.e., as a whole, including portions that would lead away from the claimed invention. M.P.E.P., § 2141.02; *W.L.*

*Gore & Assoc., Inc. v. Garlock, Inc.*, 721 F.2d 1540 (Fed. Cir. 1983), *cert. denied*, 469 U.S. 851 (1984). Furthermore, the general nature of the teaching is highly relevant in determining whether the references teach away from the claimed invention. M.P.E.P. § 2145 (X)(D); *In Re Gurly*, 27 F.3d 551, 554 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

Claim 9 provides the following: "deactivating said tag ... while said product is in said substantially enclosed area." Doing so provides many advantages, one of which is the prevention of "sweethearting" by a thief. One example of "sweethearting" occurs when a thief uses a check-out system to deactivate a security tag on a first item that was or will be correctly paid for by a thief. While such a deactivation occurs, the thief places a second item (one he has no intention of paying for) in proximity to the first item. Consequently, the second item's security tag is wrongfully deactivated along with the first item's security tag. Claim 9 specifically addresses this issue because claim 9 "examine[s] said product", "establish[es] ... physical features for said product", and "deactivat[es] said tag ... while said product is in said substantially enclosed area." In short, claim 9 prevents sweethearting.

In contrast, *Bellis* provides that a "bagging station 270 may further include ... deactivators." (*Bellis*, p. 2, ¶ 19). The bagging station 270 is located in open space and is consequently susceptible to sweethearting. (Figure 1). *Bellis* also allows for the deactivator to be "incorporated within the identification-code reader 120." (*Bellis*, p. 2, ¶ 19). As was the case with the bagging station location, the identification-code reader is located in open space and is consequently susceptible to sweethearting. (*Bellis*, Fig. 1). Simply put, *Bellis* fails to even contemplate a significant advantage (i.e., prevention of sweethearting) provided by claim 9. Further, *Bellis* uses an open space for deactivation and thus teaches away from deactivation using an enclosed area.

*Novak* cannot remedy *Bellis*' shortcoming because *Novak* doesn't even address deactivating security tags. Instead, *Novak* targets the automated assessment of physical characteristics of objects – not theft prevention.

Thus, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has failed to prove a *prima facie* case of obviousness for claim 9 (as well as dependent claims 10 – 17) in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak*, considering the cited references cannot be modified or combined as proposed by the Examiner because they teach away from the claimed invention. M.P.E.P. § 2145(D) (*Bellis* uses an open space for deactivation and *Novak* does not address deactivation).

*Knowledge of Persons of Ordinary Skill in the Art*

Claim 9 is not obvious in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak* because the third possible source for a motivation to combine the references, the knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art, does not provide or suggest a motivation to modify or combine the references. M.P.E.P. § 2143.01; *In Re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

Even when a "technologically simple concept" is claimed, it must be a finding "as to the specific understanding of principle within the knowledge of the skilled art" that would have provided the motivation to use, combine or modify the references as proposed by the examiner. *In Re Kotzab*, 217 F.3d 1365, 1371 (Fed. Cir. 2000). The Office Action lacks any such "specific understanding" and merely provides:

In view of *Novak*'s teaching, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include the old and well-known measurement of physical characteristics in an enclosed area at the checkout because otherwise a would-be shoplifter might interfere with sensor results inside the measurement area. The examiner envisions a would-be shoplifter attempting to change product detection outcomes by interfering with the detected parameters . . . in

order to indicate to the sensor that there is a different/cheaper product present . . . .

(Office Action, pp. 3-4). What "the examiner envisions" does not rise to the requirement for a "specific understanding." In fact, the level of skill in the art cannot be relied upon to provide the suggestion to combine references. M.P.E.P. § 2143.01; *Al-Site Corp. v. VSI Int'l, Inc.*, 174 F.3d 1308 (Fed. Cir. 1999). In short, the only evidence in the record regarding deactivating a security tag in a substantially enclosed area is in the applicant's disclosure. However, a suggestion or motivation to combine references may not be based on the applicant's disclosure. M.P.E.P. § 2142; *In Re Baeck*, 947 F.2d 488 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

Consequently, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has failed to prove a *prima facie* case of obviousness for claim 9 (as well as dependent claims 10-17) in light of the cited references, considering those references cannot be combined or modified as proposed by the Examiner because there is no suggestion or motivation to modify or to combine the reference teachings based on knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art. M.P.E.P. §2143.01; *In re Rouffet*, 47 U.S.P.Q.2d. 1453, 1455 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (court requires the examiner to show a motivation to combine the §103 references based on "nature of the problem", "teachings of the prior art" or "knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art").

In short, claim 9 and its dependent claims 10-17 are not obvious in light of *Bellis*, *Novak* or *Bellis* in light of *Novak* for at least the above reasons.

#### **Claims 24 - 32**

As in the case with claim 9, independent amended claim 24, and its dependent claims 25 - 32, are not obvious in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or *Bellis* in view of *Novak* for any of the following reasons.

Amended claim 24 provides:

A check-out system...comprising:

...

a[n] ... evaluator for establishing ... physical features ... while said product is in said substantially enclosed area;

...

a deactivation device for deactivating said tag ... while said product is in said substantially enclosed area.

Thus, amended claim 24 "establish[es] physical features" and "deactivat[es] said tag ... while said product is in said substantially enclosed area."

A. Cited References Fail to Teach Every Element of Claim

As was the case with claim 9, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has failed to prove a prima facie case of obviousness in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak* because the references do not teach or suggest all of the elements of the claim (i.e., a deactivation device for deactivating said tag ... while said product is in said substantially enclosed area.) M.P.E.P. §2143.03; In re Rouffet, 47 U.S.P.Q.2d. 1453, 1455 (Fed. Cir. 1998)(§103 rejections must not rely on incorrect factual predicates such as failing to appreciate differences between a claim and prior art.) As a result, claim 24 (and dependent claims 25 - 32) are not obvious in light of the cited references.

B. No Motivation to Combine the Cited References

There are three possible sources for a motivation to combine references: the nature of the problem to be solved, the teachings of the asserted reference(s), and the knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art. M.P.E.P. § 2143.01; *In Re Rouffet*, 149 F.3d 1350, 1357 (Fed. Cir. 1998). These three sources are addressed below.

As was the case with claim 9, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has failed to prove a prima facie case of obviousness for claim 24 (as well as dependent claims 25 – 32) in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak*, considering there is no motivation to combine the cited references because the cited references address different problems (i.e., security vs. automated check-out). M.P.E.P. § 2143.01.

Also, as was the case with claim 9, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has failed to prove a prima facie case of obviousness for claim 24 (as well as dependent claims 25 – 32) in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or even a combination of *Bellis* and *Novak*, considering there is no motivation to combine the cited references because they teach away from the claimed invention. M.P.E.P. § 2145(D) (*Bellis* uses an open space for deactivation and *Novak* does not address deactivation).

In addition, as was the case with claim 9, Applicant respectfully asserts that the Examiner has failed to prove a prima facie case of obviousness for claim 24 (as well as dependent claims 25-32) in light of the cited references, considering those references cannot be combined or modified as proposed by the Examiner because there is no suggestion or motivation to modify or to combine the reference teachings based on knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art. M.P.E.P. §2143.01; In re Rouffet, 47 U.S.P.Q.2d. 1453, 1455 (Fed. Cir. 1998) (court requires the examiner to show a motivation to combine the §103 references based on "nature of the problem", "teachings of the prior art" or "knowledge of persons of ordinary skill in the art").

In short, claim 24, and its dependent claims 25 - 32, are not obvious in light of *Bellis*, *Novak*, or *Bellis* in view of *Novak* for at least the above reasons.



VIII. CONCLUSION

For the reasons noted above, the rejections of claims 9-17 and 24-32 are in error. Appellants respectfully request reversal of the rejections and allowance of claims 9-17 and 24-32.

Respectfully submitted,

WINSTEAD SECHREST & MINICK P.C.

Attorneys for Appellants

By: 

Kelly K. Kordzik  
Reg. No. 36,571

P.O. Box 50784  
Dallas, Texas 75201  
(512) 370-2832

## APPENDIX

1       9.     A check-out method for a product having a security tag associated therewith,  
2       comprising the steps of:

3             storing one or more physical characteristics for said product;

4             recalling said one or more physical characteristics when a consumer checks  
5       out said product;

6             placing said product in a substantially enclosed area;

7             examining said product while said product is in said substantially enclosed  
8       area;

9             establishing one or more physical features for said product while said product  
10       is in said substantially enclosed area;

11            comparing said one or more physical characteristics to said one or more  
12       physical features;

13            generating a signal if said one or more physical characteristics substantially  
14       match said one or more physical features; and

15            deactivating said tag with a deactivation device after receipt of said signal and  
16       while said product is in said substantially enclosed area.

1       10.    The method according to claim 9 wherein said one or more physical  
2       characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to weight.

1       11.    The method according to claim 9 wherein said one or more physical  
2       characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to size.

1       12.    The method according to claim 9 wherein said one or more physical  
2       characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to shape.

1       13.    The method according to claim 9 wherein said one or more physical  
2       characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to color.

1 14. The method according to claim 9 wherein said one or more physical  
2 characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to two or more of the  
3 following: weight, size, shape, color or surface texture.

1 15. The method according to claim 9 further comprising the step of ensuring no  
2 other object is in said substantially enclosed area once said product has been placed in  
3 said substantially enclosed area but before said tag has been deactivated.

1 16. The method according to claim 15 further comprising the step of generating  
2 an alert signal if an object, in addition to said product, is detected to be in said  
3 substantially enclosed area once said product has been placed in said substantially  
4 enclosed area but before said tag has been deactivated.

1 17. The method according to claim 16 further comprising the step of preventing  
2 any deactivation of said tag once said alert signal has been generated.

1 24. A check-out system for a product having a security tag associated therewith,  
2 comprising:

3 a substantially enclosed area;

4 a database for storing one or more physical characteristics for said product;

5 a scanner for retrieving from said database said one or more physical  
6 characteristics;

7 a physical characteristic evaluator for establishing one or more physical  
8 features for said product while said product is in said substantially enclosed area;

9 a computer for comparing said one or more physical characteristics to said one  
10 or more physical features;

11 an electronic circuit for generating a signal if said one or more physical  
12 characteristics substantially match said one or more physical features; and

13 a deactivation device for deactivating said tag after receipt of said signal and  
14 while said product is in said substantially enclosed area.

1       25.    The system according to claim 24 wherein said one or more physical  
2       characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to weight.

1       26.    The system according to claim 24 wherein said one or more physical  
2       characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to size.

1       27.    The system according to claim 24 wherein said one or more physical  
2       characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to shape.

1       28.    The system according to claim 24 wherein said one or more physical  
2       characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to color.

1       29.    The system according to claim 24 wherein said one or more physical  
2       characteristics and said one or more physical features pertain to two or more of the  
3       following: weight, size, shape, color or surface texture.

1       30.    The system according to claim 24 further comprising a means for ensuring no  
2       other object is in said substantially enclosed area once said product has been placed in  
3       said substantially enclosed area but before said tag has been deactivated.

1       31.    The system according to claim 30 further comprising means for generating an  
2       alert signal if an object, in addition to said product, is detected to be in said  
3       substantially enclosed area once said product has been placed in said substantially  
4       enclosed area but before said tag has been deactivated.

1       32.    The system according to claim 31 further comprising means for preventing  
2       any deactivation of said tag once said alert signal has been generated.